

**West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 9, 2015**

**Attendees:** Amal Ali, Mary Andrews, Jeff Bersin, Helen Drohan, Jamahl Hines, Dan Jordan, Joe Kalache, Leo Negron, Jeff Souza, Pat Tyler, Mark Zydanowicz

**Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures / Announcements**

Jeff Bersin welcomed members and introductions were made. Meeting minutes from the March meeting were approved.

Pat Tyler handed out a form for members to complete their addresses for submission to the Town Clerk. Jeff Bersin announced that students from Hall High School went to Morley Elementary School to speak with students about bullying prevention. He also announced that it is "Flocking Season," which is a fundraiser for Safe Graduation parties.

**Tune in to Life – Pat Tyler**

Pat Tyler presented an overview of Tune in to Life week, which will take place this month from Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> through Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and include:

- "A Trip Down Memory Lane" intergenerational event where the Hall High Jazz Band will perform music for seniors
- "Opening Lines," a student-led workshop on talking with your teen about substance use organized by the Lead By Example student organization
- "Fifth Grade Poster Project" where fifth grade students create posters on what they'd rather be doing than drugs. Firefighters will then go into the schools to give the students Tune in to Life tee-shirts and talk with them about their posters. As part of this initiative, a parent letter with a handout entitled "Parenting Myths and Realities" will be sent to all fifth grade parents.

**Conard Safe Driving Program – Jamahl Hines**

Jamahl Hines of Conard High School and Leo Negron of the West Hartford Police Department reported on the Conard Safe Driving Program, which took place at Conard over 3 days. The program was part of a West Hartford Police Department grant. On the first day, guest speaker David Graham spoke to juniors and seniors about driving at high rates of speed. He shared his experience of driving 101 MPH in a 35 MPH zone, which resulted in an accident that killed one and injured others. Part of his sentence included doing community service related to reckless driving, which he has continued to do even after his commitment was met. Conard staff did a debriefing session with students the following day after the presentation. One girl shared that if he just spoke about drugs and alcohol she would have tuned out because she doesn't use either. However, since it was about reckless driving, she paid more attention because she's been exposed to reckless driving. One boy shared that he hoped students remembered the message of the presentation during prom time. Another student shared that they needed to hear his message and that the speaker caught students' attention.

During the third day, WHPD officers brought the "Drunk Busters" go kart to the high school in the main corridor for juniors and seniors to experience, and some underclassmen witnessed the activities as well. They also had the students try on 4 goggles ranging in intoxication levels, as well as 1 pair of goggles that simulated what it would be like to be driving under the influence of marijuana. Students engaged in the

heel/toe walk and turn that would be used in a sobriety test while wearing the goggles. In addition, students tossed a soft football while wearing the goggles to show how their perceptions and motor skills were impacted. Students reported that they were surprised by how they were affected. A video on distracted driving was shown to students as part of the program. The plan is to expand the program to other West Hartford public and private schools. Conard plans to continue to build on the program and may do a simulated Life Star crash scene with student actors in the future.

A discussion ensued about distracted driving and driving under the influence. Officer Negrón shared that two hands on the wheel is the law and that a blood alcohol level of .08 and above is illegal. If a person is stopped for alcohol use, the officer will conduct a horizontal gaze test. For other drugs, a vertical gaze test will be done. He reported that if someone is stopped for suspicion of driving under the influence, they can decline the breathalyzer, but they will be arrested. The arresting officer will conduct two breathalyzer tests within 15 minutes of each other to determine how long it has passed since the suspect consumed alcohol. The WHPD may have the “Drunk Busters” car program at Celebrate West Hartford.

#### **Grant Update and Lead by Example Middle School Event – Dan Jordan**

Amal Ali from the Institute for Community Research (ICR) shared information about the “Opening Lines” event to be held on Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and led by Lead by Example youth regarding parent/teen communication related to substance use. Results from the student drug/alcohol survey and the parent survey will be presented. In addition, results will be shared from a survey of 102 high school teenagers related to teen/parent communication. ICR requested a therapist for the panel and Pat Tyler agreed to see if a Bridge therapist could be assigned. The program will close with a Q & A session. There have been efforts to involve Community of Concern in this effort and to have a Community of Concern representative on the PTOs, but this effort has been unsuccessful. Methods to spread the word about the “Opening Lines” event were brainstormed. Helen Drohan agreed to share the information with private schools. Helen suggested that Lead by Example be highlighted at school parent nights.

Dan Jordan gave a grant update. He shared that ICR has worked with the SAPC for the past five years and that it’s time to transition their work to the SAPC. ICR’s role would shift to a more advisory one over time. The current Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services five year collaborative grant with ICR and SAPC ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The next five year grant proposal is due April 20<sup>th</sup>. The new grant is different from the previous one which was more program-based and was measured by the school drug and alcohol surveys. For the current grant, all goals were met except the area of “perception of harm,” which could be a future area of focus.

The new grant focus could be sustainability and building capacity to maintain programs long-term. Dan discussed possible areas of transition including managing the data from the drug and alcohol surveys, as well as overseeing the Lead by Example program. Dan spoke with Keats Jarmon, Conard Assistant Principal, regarding the Lead by Example transition.

#### **Update on Prescription Drug Dropbox – Jeff Bersin**

Jeff Bersin reported that he spoke with Tracey Gove, West Hartford Police Chief, regarding the possibility of having a drop box located at the West Hartford Police Department. Through legislation, CT towns have access to \$1,000 to buy a secure drop box. Tracey reported that he is interested in providing this service, but will not be doing so at this time due to the related staffing and disposal costs. Tracey shared that during

“Take Back Day,” some medical companies tried to dispose of items and there is concern that other towns might try to dispose of items in the West Hartford drop box.

Take Back Days are no longer being offered in communities. Helen Drohan offered to call Bloomfield Police to see how they manage their drop box. There was also discussion about a possible cost sharing option among area towns.

### **May and June Agenda Creation – All SAPC Members**

The following ideas were presented as potential agenda items for the May 14<sup>th</sup> and June 4<sup>th</sup> SAPC meetings:

- Expansion of the Conard Safe Driving Program to Hall High School and area private schools
- Prescription Drug Drop box follow-up (Helen Drohan)
- Expanding SAPC membership
- Self-medication by adolescents due to mental health issues
- Bringing Chris Herren, former NBA star, to town to speak to parents and teens about his past substance abuse. Jamahl Hines agreed to reach out to Northwest Catholic High School for more information since Chris spoke there over the past year. Jeff Bersin reminded members that there is still approximately \$1,600 in the Community of Concern budget that could possibly be used to help pay for this event.
- Joe Kalache is aware of a former New England Patriots player who has a message to share about substance abuse. He agreed to obtain more information.
- Joe Kalache shared that during the next CASAC meeting an area of interest will be determined that all CASAC towns can rally around. Joe agreed to report back at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

### **Next WH SAPC Meeting**

Thursday, May 14, 2015 5pm to 6:30pm – West Hartford Town Hall room 400

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tyler

April 10, 2015

